

Patent claims

1. Method of setting up a connection in a communication environment controlled by a communication system (LC) between a first node (NA) which is allocated to a first contact (A) and a second node (NSP) which is allocated to a second contact (SP), with the following steps:
 - within the first node (NA) there is provided for the first contact (A) a contact element (SBOT) which graphically represents the second contact (SP) and to which an unambiguous identification (ID) and contact data (DAT) are allocated (step S1),
 - the contact data (DAT) are accessed by means of a program (PRG) and the connection from the first node (NA) to the communication system (LC) set up (step S2);
 - it is then checked within the communication system (LC) with the help of the unambiguous identification (ID) of the contact element (SBOT) whether the contact element (SBOT) is an element approved by the communication system (LC) for the setting-up of connections (in step S2);
 - the connection to the second node (NSP) is set up depending on the result of the check (step S3).
2. Method according to claim 2,
 - in which the contact data (DAT) contain at least details (W, SP, PAR) about services and/or functions, in particular communication services and/or functions which are provided by the second contact (SP) for the first contact (A) (in step S1); in which in the communication system (LC) the details (W, SP, PAR) contained in the contact data (DAT) are checked (in step S4); and in which, depending on the result of the test, the communication functions or services are cleared for use by the first contact (A) (step S5).
3. Method according to claim 1 or 2,
 - in which at least the first contact is a user (A) of the communication system (LC) to whom a terminal (PC) is allocated which is covered by the first node (NA); in

which the program is a user program (PRG) which is run by the user (A) via his terminal (PC) in order to set up contact connections with other contacts (SP; B) via the communication system (LC); and in which the contact element (SBOT; COMB) is provided as a program object for the program (PRG), in particular in the form of a file or of a library.

4. Method according to claim 2 or 3,
in which the second contact is a service provider (SP); and in which the details (W, SP, PAR) contained in the contact data (DAT) are predetermined by the service provider (SP), and in which the second node (NSP) comprises a PC, in particular a server (SER), which is connected to the communication system (LC) and which is allocated to the service provider (SP).
5. Method according to claim 3,
in which the contact element is displayed as a graphic element (SBOT) on the terminal (PC) of the user (A), wherein a graphic design and/or animation of the element (SBOT) is predetermined by the service provider (SP).
6. Method according to claims 3 and 4,
in which several contact elements (SBOT1, SBOT2, SBOT3) which are allocated to different service providers are provided to the user (A) for selection; and in which the contact element (SBOT1) selected by the user (A) is installed on the terminal (PC) of the user (A) by a drag & drop operation on the display, in particular on the desktop (DTA) of his terminal (PC).
7. Method according to claim 1 or 3,
in which the first contact is a first user (A) and the second contact is a second user (B) of the communication system (LC), to each of which a terminal (PC, PDA) is allocated, which is covered by the first node (NA) and the second node (NB) respectively; in which the contact element (COMB) is provided to the first user (A) by the second user (B); and in which the program is a user program (PRG) which is installed at least on the terminal (PC) of the first user (A) and is

run by the first user (A), in order to set up contact connections with the second user (B) via the communication system (LC), wherein the contact element (COMB) is provided as a program object for the program (PRG), in particular in the form of a file or of a library.

8. Method according to one of claims 2 to 7,
in which the details (W, SP, PAR) contained in the contact data are provided with parameters (PAR) which define graphic and/or functional properties of the contact element (SBOT; COMB), in particular properties for a graphic design, an animation, a period of validity and/or an intended use of the contact element (SBOT, COMB).
9. Communication system (LC) for controlling a communication environment and for controlling the setting-up of a connection in this communication environment between a first node (NA) which is allocated to a first contact (A) and a second node (NSP) which is allocated to a second contact (SP), with the following system components:
 - a data-processing device (7) which produces contact elements (SBOT) which in each case graphically represent one contact (SP) at another contact (A), in the form of files, wherein the data-processing device (7) allocates to each contact element (SBOT) an unambiguous identification (ID) and contact data (DAT);
 - an administration device (8) which provides the first contact (A) with such a contact element (SBOT) which graphically represents the second contact (SP) and to which an unambiguous identification (ID) and contact data (DAT) are allocated;
 - computation means which, using the unambiguous identification (ID) of the contact element (SBOT), check whether the contact element (SBOT) is an element allowed by a communication system (LC) for the setting-up of connections; and
 - control means which control the setting-up of the connection from the first node (NA) to the communication system (LC) and onward to the second node (NSP).

10. Contact element (SBOT) for the setting-up of a connection in a communication environment controlled by a communication system (LC) between a first node (NA) which is allocated to a first contact (A) and a second node (NSP) which is allocated to a second contact (SP), with the following features:
- the contact element (SBOT) contains at least one graphic element for the representation on a display, in particular on a desktop (DTA), of a terminal (PC);
 - the contact element (SBOT) contains functional elements which comprise an unambiguous identification (ID) which indicates that the contact element (SBOT) is allowed for the setting-up of connections in the communication system (LC);
 - the functional elements of the contact element (SBOT) contain contact data (DAT) for the setting-up of the connection to the second node (NSP).